

West Seattle ADU Points of Demonstration

Project Location And Description

- 8836 38th Avenue SW, West Seattle, a predominantly single-family neighborhood.
- Construction of a detached accessory dwelling unit in a SF5000 zone.

Housing Statement

On this 6400 SF lot currently stands a modestly sized (about 800 SF), two-bedroom, single-story home. Except for one brief absence, the owner has lived here her entire life, the house having been built by her father and grandfather. Her children are now grown, and she wishes to construct a one-bedroom detached accessory unit over a two-car garage in the rear of the lot, on the alley, in an existing terraced area where a one-car garage now stands.

The Owner wishes to live in the accessory unit while renting the main house, thus enabling her to remain in the neighborhood after retirement. The main house is suitable for a two-person household or a family with one or two children.

Affordability Features

1. Use of an existing site which is already developed, including mature landscaping. Minimal site development costs. No land cost.
2. Use of land which is otherwise used mainly for parking.
3. Small, compact dwelling units (existing and as proposed).
4. The main house can be rented to three-person household at 80% of median income. The monthly payment on the accessory unit would be affordable to a one-person household at less than 80% of median income.

“Cracking the Code”

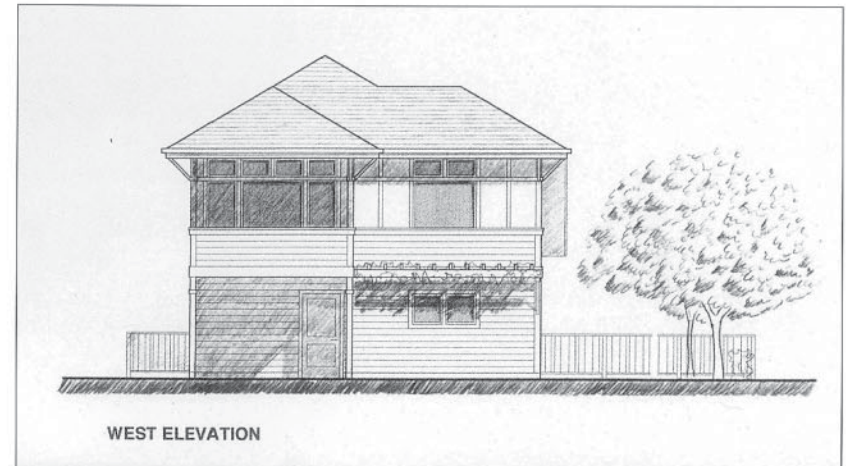
1. The accessory dwelling unit is detached, in violation of Land Use Code 23.44.041 A.4 which prohibits accessory dwelling units in structures detached from the main structure.
2. The accessory dwelling unit is partially located in the required 25' rear yard, in violation of Land Use Code 23.44.014.B.

The project is compliant in all other respects including lot coverage, building height, side yards, parking, and the 1000 SF limitation on an accessory dwelling unit.

Given the large, deep lot with alley access, a detached accessory unit can be built on the alley without altering the scale and character of the neighborhood, without imposing additional burdens to on-street parking, and without any other harmful effects. The building mass of the two dwellings taken together is less, and the scale is smaller, than a large new dwelling such as might be expected to replace the existing dwelling were the owner forced to move. Allowing the detached accessory unit is thus more likely to preserve the scale and character of the neighborhood, than prohibiting it. The long-time owner of the property is enabled to remain in the neighborhood past retirement, and the city's stock of affordable housing is increased (“one unit at a time”).

Neighborhood Acceptability

The Owner mailed questionnaires to all residents of her block and the block-front adjacent to the alley, explaining the nature of the project and asking for a reaction. She received 17 responses out of 36 mailed, 15 supporting the project and 2 opposing it. Four respondents offered to be the neighborhood sponsor.



West Seattle ADU

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